Enid Blyton

Rosemary Thomson

THE POLE STAR FAMILY

The *Pole Star* sailed into harbour.

See page 65

The Pole Star Family

by

Enid Blyton

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FOREWORD

This is another story about Mike, Belinda and Ann, who go to school during the week, and live in caravans each week-end. The first book, *The Caravan Family*, told how they lived in their caravans. The second book, *The Saucy Jane Family*, told how they went for a holiday on a houseboat. In *The Seaside Family* they take the caravans to the seaside for the summer; in *The Buttercup Farm Family* they have a holiday on a farm; and in *The Queen Elizabeth Family* off they go in a liner to New York and back.

This book tells how they all go for a long trip in a big steamer, the *Pole Star*, and how they visit far-away lands, and what they do on board ship.

I hope you will like it as much as you liked the others.

Love from,

Enid Blyton

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EVERYONE thought that Mike, Belinda and Ann were very lucky children. "Fancy having a caravan to live in each week-end!" said Kenneth, one of their school friends.

"*Two*," said Mike. "Painted red and yellow. One for Mummy and Daddy and one for us three. It's fun."

"And there are taps in each caravan that really turn on, and bunks for us to sleep in," said Belinda. "When the night is warm we have our door open so that we can see right out in the field. It's lovely in buttercup time. The buttercups grow right up to the caravan steps!"

"It does sound lovely," said Kenneth. "And didn't you live in a houseboat on the river once?"

"We lived in the *Saucy Jane* on a canal," said Ann. "We had a glorious time. Oh, I do wish we could go in a boat again!"

"Yes, but I'd like to go in a boat that travels about," said Mike. "Our houseboat stayed still. Wouldn't I like to go in a steamer!"

"What, far away to foreign lands?" said Kenneth. "You don't mean all by yourself, do you?"

"Oh, *no*—with our whole family," said Mike. "We do everything together. It wouldn't be fun, somehow, if we couldn't enjoy things with one another."

"I think you're a lucky family," said Kenneth, and all the others agreed. "Lovely things are always happening to you."

But oh dear—horrid ones happened too. The very next day, which was Saturday, Mummy had a telegram that said Granny was very ill. She called to Daddy.

"Oh, Daddy—look at this. I must go at once. Can you see to the children this week-end?"

"Yes, of course," said Daddy, "and Belinda is very sensible now. We can trust her to do the shopping and a bit of cooking. Can't we, Belinda?"

"Oh yes," said Belinda, "but Mummy—

poor old Granny! Do take her some flowers from us all, won't you?"

Mummy went off in a hurry, looking worried. The caravan family set to work to tidy up the caravans, and then Belinda went off to do the shopping.

She did hope that Granny wasn't *very* ill. Granny was a darling. She was kind and generous and liked making jokes. She had been going to come and stay with them in the caravans, when Daddy went away for a week, at the end of summer term. Now perhaps she wouldn't.

When the end of term came Granny was still ill. And then, in August, something else happened! Mike began to cough badly, and then he suddenly made a very queer whooping noise.

"Oh dear!" said Mummy. "That sounds like whooping-cough to me. What a good thing it is the summer holidays, and you won't miss any school. Daddy, as Granny is now in a nursing-home, I think I'd better take him to her house, and hope that Belinda and Ann won't get it. They can stay here in the caravans with you."

Belinda and Ann were very sad. Poor Mike. All alone at Granny's in the summer holidays. And even Granny wasn't there!

But in a week's time both Belinda and Ann had whooping-cough too, so Mike was brought back to the caravan, and they were once more all together. Mike had it badly and so had Ann, but Belinda whooped only once or twice.

"What a summer holiday," groaned poor Mummy. "Granny ill all the time—though she's really getting on now, thank goodness—and now the children down with whooping-cough!"

"We are certainly not a very lucky family at the moment," said Mike, gloomily, and coughed.

The holidays went by. The summer was not a very good one, and Mummy was quite in despair, because, she said, the children needed a lot of sunshine, and were getting hardly any. They nearly left the caravans and went to stay at Granny's.

Soon the autumn term came near. Mummy looked at her three pale-faced children and felt sad. "They need a good holiday with

The holidays went by

plenty of sunshine," she told Granny, when next she went to see her. "I don't like sending them back to school looking so pale."

Granny took her hand. "Now you listen to me, my dear," she said. "I've got a great idea. You know that the doctor says I must go away for a holiday in a ship somewhere—on a cruise. Well, I don't want to go alone. I want you all to come with me. It will do the children such a lot of good—and you too!"

Mummy looked at Granny in astonishment. "A cruise! Oh, Mother! What an idea—why, we couldn't possibly do such . . ."

"Yes, you could. I shall pay for you all. It would please me so much—and think how the children would love to go off in a great steamer, and see all kinds of different countries!"

"Yes, they would. Oh, they'd *love* it!" said Mummy, beginning to feel most excited. "I must go back to the caravans and see what their father says. Dear me, what *will* the children say when they hear!"

She kissed Granny good-bye and hurried off, her eyes shining. What a holiday that would be! How Mike would love it—and as for Belinda and Ann, they would go quite mad with joy. If only, only, only it could really happen!

MUMMY hurried back to the caravans with her news. The children saw her coming and flew to meet her. "How is Granny? Did you give her the heather we sent her? When is she coming out of the nursing-home?"

"Very soon now," said Mummy. "Where's Daddy? I've got some news for him."

"Good news, or bad?" asked Mike. Belinda looked at him scornfully.

"Can't you see Mummy's face? It's *good* news, of course, isn't it, Mummy? What is it?"

"I can't tell you yet," said Mummy. "Ah, there's Daddy." She ran across the field to the stream, where Daddy was rinsing something.

"It would be nice to have some good luck for a change," said Mike gloomily. "We've been a very bad-luck family lately. I hated having whooping-cough."

"Well, you haven't got it now," said Ann. "You've stopped coughing. Or almost. And when you do cough it's only just to remind yourself that you've had it!"

"Don't be silly," said Mike, and walked off. Mike wasn't quite himself. He was rather bad-tempered and moody. Mummy said it was because he'd had whooping-cough so badly, and wanted a change.

Presently Mummy and Daddy both came over to where the children sat in a row on the steps of their caravan, one above the other. Mummy was smiling.

Ann suddenly felt excited. She jumped up and ran to her mother. "What is it? You look like Christmas-time, all happy and full of good secrets!"

"I feel like that too," said Mummy. "Now listen, children—how would you like to miss school for a few weeks and go holidaying with me and Daddy and Granny?"

"Oooh," said Ann, thrilled. Mike and Belinda looked at Mummy. They had been rather looking forward to going back to school—somehow these holidays had been too long.

"Where to?" asked Mike cautiously.

"Oh, to Portugal—and Spain—and the Canary Isles—and down to North Africa," said Mummy, airily.

"But Mummy! Mummy, do you mean it? What, right away across the sea—in a ship?" shouted Mike.

"Yes, in a big steamer," said Daddy, smiling. "It's what you've always wanted to do, Mike, isn't it?"

"I can't believe it," said Mike, looking as if he were about to burst with joy. His face went as red as the poppies in the field.

"Well, you haven't told us if you'd like to go yet," said Daddy, with a chuckle. The three children threw themselves on him and almost pulled him over.

"Daddy! You know we want to go. It would be too super for words. When are we going? How long for? What is our ship? How . . ."

"Let's all sit down and talk about it," said Mummy, smiling happily. "Now listen—the doctor has said that Granny *must* go away on a cruise. . . ."

"What's a cruise?" asked Ann at once.

"A voyage in a ship," said Mummy. "Well, Granny doesn't want to go alone, she wants us all to go with her. In the ordinary way you couldn't, because of school—but as you all look so pale and washed-out with that horrid whooping-cough, Daddy and I think it would be a good idea to do as Granny says—and all go off together!"

"Oh, Mummy—it's glorious," said Belinda. "Let's make plans at once. Shall we go to-morrow?"

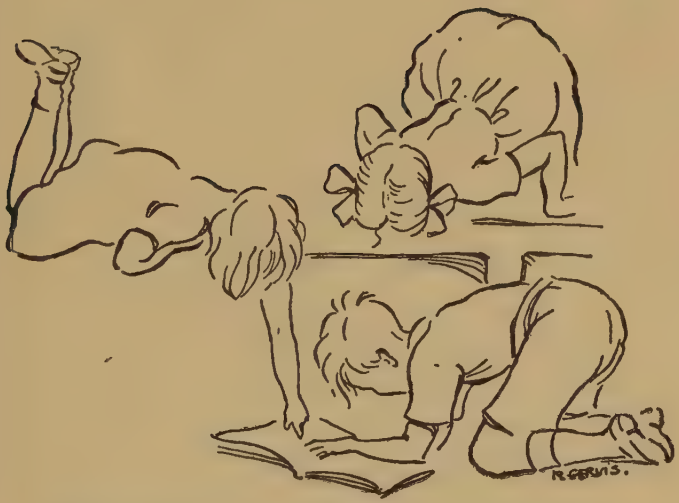
"Dear me, no," said Mummy. "There are tickets to get and clothes to pack, the caravans to store somewhere, and the horses to see to."

"But I can't possibly wait more than a day," said Ann.

Everyone laughed. That was so like Ann.

"Well, darling, would you like to go off by yourself?" said Mummy. "I daresay I could arrange it."

But no—that wouldn't do at all. "I'll wait," said Ann, with a sigh. "I do hope it comes quickly, though. Oh, fancy—we'll be sleeping on board a big ship, right out to sea! You don't think we shall get shipwrecked,



Mike, Belinda and Ann studied an atlas

do you, Daddy?" she asked after a moment's thought.

"I shouldn't think so," said Daddy. "But there are plenty of lifeboats in case we do, you know. And anyway, we can all swim and float."

"We're a lucky family again," said Mike. "We've been unlucky for weeks—now we're lucky. Shall we start packing this very minute?"

"Darling, we are not going till the beginning of October," said Mummy. "Two

whole weeks to wait. Granny won't be allowed to go till then. If I were you I'd find an atlas and see exactly where our ship will go. Daddy will tell you."

So, for the next few hours, Mike, Belinda and Ann studied an atlas harder than they had ever studied one at school!

"We shall start at Southampton—here it is—and go down the Solent, look—and then down south. Here is Portugal—and we'll go round a bit of Spain—and then to Madeira or on to the Canary Isles—what a lovely, lovely name!"

"And then to Africa. Will there be monkeys there?"

"There'll be three extra when *you* arrive!" said Mummy. "What a lovely time we shall all have!"

3 OFF TO SOUTHAMPTON AT LAST!

THE next two weeks passed rather slowly, because the children were so impatient, and found it difficult to wait till the day came for setting off. Belinda got the idea that it would be helpful if she and Ann got all their things together to pack.

She found warm jerseys, a thick winter coat for each of them, and even got out their warm vests and knickers. Mummy came to see what she and Ann were doing.

"We've got all our clothes ready for you," said Belinda, proudly. Mummy stared at the pile of warm jerseys, coats and vests. Then she laughed.

"Darling! We're taking all our summery things! It will be autumn when we leave and come back—but it will be hotter than summer on the trip! We shan't want any of those things; just your thinnest frocks and sunsuits and sandals, that's all."

"Gracious!" said Belinda. "I didn't think of that. Oh Mummy, how glorious! Will it really be as hot and sunny as summer-time?"

"Hotter," said Mummy. "So put all those things away again, silly. I'm going to take you into the nearest town to buy you all a few more cotton things. And myself too."

Daddy got the tickets for them all. They were to travel on a big ship called the *Pole Star*. He showed them a picture of her.

"She looks simply beautiful," said Mike. "She's all white. Daddy, where will our cabins be? Up on deck?"

"Oh, no," said Daddy. "I've got three cabins for us just below water-level; they will be nice and cool."

"Shan't we have any port-holes to look out of?" said Belinda, disappointed. "I did want to look out of those round holes you see in the side of big ships."

"Yes, you'll have a port-hole!" said Daddy, laughing. "It will be just above the level of the water—the waves will sometimes splash against it!"

That sounded good. The children gazed

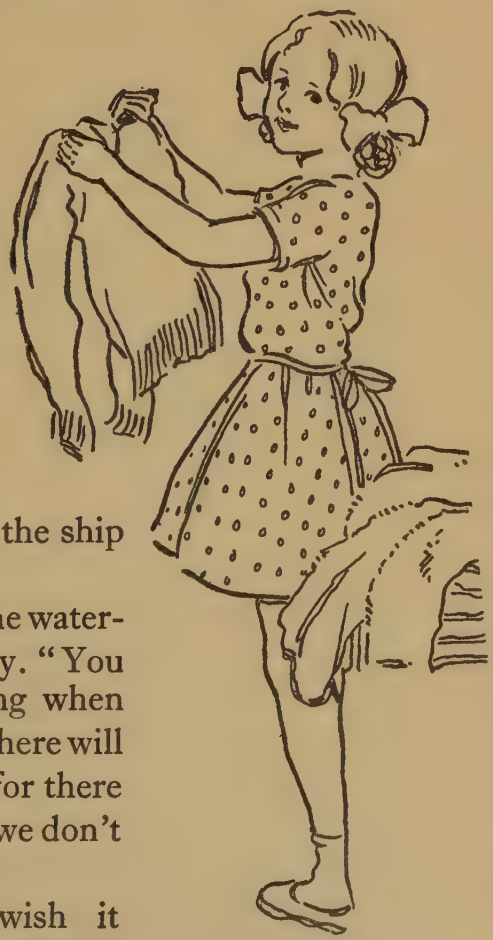
at the picture of the big ship. There were two decks, one above the other. There was a high part that Daddy called the bridge.

"That's where the captain stands, at the wheel," said Daddy.

"Where's the engine-room?" asked Mike. "I shall want to see the engines make the ship go."

"Down below the water-level," said Daddy. "You shall see everything when we get on board. There will be plenty of time, for there will be days when we don't touch land at all."

"Oh dear, I wish it would come," sighed Ann. "How many more days?



"We've got all our clothes ready."

To-morrow, and the day after—and then, THE DAY!"

It came at last, of course. The caravans had been pulled into the town the day before and left in a big garage. Davey and Clopper, the two horses, had been lent to a farmer. Mummy, Daddy and the children all went to spend the last night at Granny's.

Granny was home now, looking a bit thinner, but very cheerful and excited. "Well!" she said, kissing the children, "aren't we going to have a lovely holiday together? I hope you've all made up your minds not to fall overboard. It's such a nuisance if the ship has to keep stopping to pick up children from the sea!"

They laughed. "We won't fall over," said Mike. "You forget we lived for quite a long time on a houseboat, Granny. We're used to being careful."

"When do we start?" said Ann.

"Early to-morrow morning," said Daddy. "We go up to London in a car, and catch the train to Southampton. We shall be on board at half-past two. The *Pole Star* is due to leave at four o'clock."

"Aren't we going to have a lovely holiday?"

"Oh, it sounds lovely," said Ann. "I shall go to bed almost directly after tea to-day, to make to-morrow come sooner. Oh, Mummy, you don't think anything will happen to stop us going, do you?".

"I don't see why anything should," said Mummy. "Now you eat your tea, Ann. You've had that bit of bread and butter on your plate for ages."

"I can't eat anything," said Ann. "I feel

full up with excitement—yes really, Mummy, as if I'd eaten a whole lot of excitement and couldn't eat any more."

At last THE morning came. Everyone was awake early. All the trunks were ready. The sun shone down brilliantly, and made it real holiday weather. There was a sudden toot-toot in the drive.

"The car, the car! Quick, Daddy, the car!" yelled Mike.

"Well, it won't vanish in thin air if we keep it waiting a moment," said Daddy. "Now you take this bag, Mike. Tell the driver to come in and help me."

And then in a few minutes they were all speeding off to London. Then they were in a big railway station, packed with people—and then in the train to go down to Southampton. They were off to the sea!

Lunch in the train, then a gathering together of bags. The train slid slowly into a big station and stopped.

"Southampton!" yelled Mike, making everybody jump. "Our ship's here somewhere. Come along, let's go and find it! Hurrah, hurrah!"

4 ALL ABOARD THE POLE STAR!

"WE must go to the docks to find our ship, the *Pole Star*," said Daddy. "Mike, come back. You will find it just outside the station, silly boy! It's a long way away."

So it was. And when they did at last arrive at the docks, the children fell silent in awe. The steamers were so very, very big—much bigger than they had ever imagined!

"Oh, Daddy—why, they're ENORMOUS!" said Mike, almost in a whisper. Their porter smiled at him.

"You look over there, sonny—you'll see the finest ship there is!" he said. "The *Queen Elizabeth*. She's just in."

They all stared at the *Queen Elizabeth*. Mike felt a queer lump coming into his throat. He felt so very proud of that beautiful British ship. There she lay beside the dock, towering high, gleaming with paint, her funnels topping her grandly.

"Oh—I didn't dream we should see *her*," said Mike at last. "I never in my life thought I'd see such a big ship. Why, she must take thousands of people!"

"She does," said the porter. "She's a floating town. Grand sight, isn't she? Ah, there's nobody can beat us Britons at ships. Now then—we'll find the *Pole Star*."

"There she is, there she is!" shouted Belinda, suddenly. "Just near by."

So she was. The children looked at her in delight. She was small compared with the *Queen Elizabeth*—but all the same much, much bigger than they had expected. She was gleaming white from top to toe.

"A beautiful ship too," said Daddy. "Fast, comfortable, and with lovely lines. Well, we'll go aboard. Come, Granny, I'll help you up the gangway."

There was a kind of little wooden bridge stretching down from the *Pole Star's* second deck to the dock where they stood. "So that's the gangway," said Belinda. "I always wanted to go up a proper gangway. Bags I go first!"

Up she went, and Mike and Ann followed.

Now at last they were on board ship

Daddy was helping Granny. A sailor came behind, his hand on Mummy's elbow, for sometimes the ship moved, and the gangway moved with it.

And now at last they were on board ship. Ann gazed up and down the deck. It seemed very long indeed. There were scores of people, carrying bags and packages. Sailors in their dark blue suits went about their business. Ann thought they looked very nice indeed.

"We'll go and find our cabins first, and put our odds and ends there," said Mummy. A sailor took her down some steps into a big room that looked like a lounge. Then down some more steps still.

"We're going down into the heart of the ship!" said Belinda. "Gracious, are our cabins right down here?"

They went down a passage lit by electric light, and came to three doors in a row. Numbers 42, 43, 44. The sailor opened the first door.

"Oh!" said Ann, looking in, "what a lovely place. But look—we've got proper beds to sleep in. I thought we'd have bunks.

And there's a wash-basin too. And a little dressing-table with drawers—and even a wardrobe! Goodness, it's like a proper bedroom."

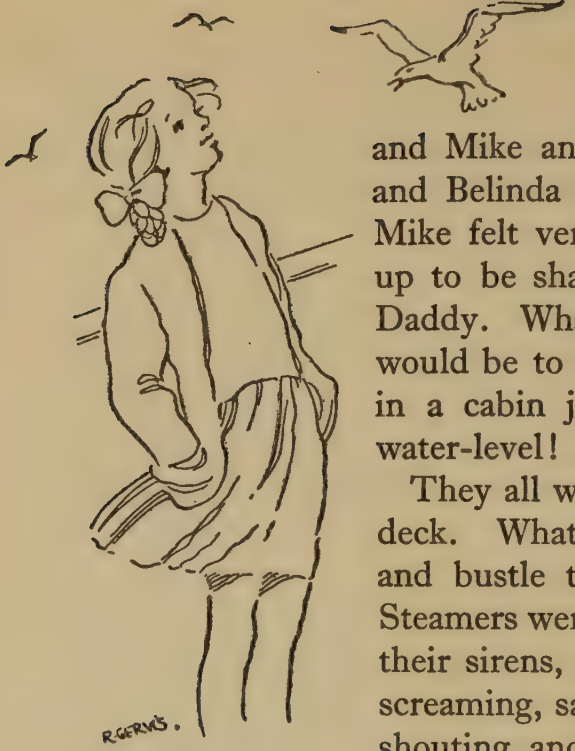
"It's got a port-hole!" cried Mike, in delight, and ran to it. "Oh, look—the water's just below it. Do look! Can we open it, sailor?"

"If you like," said the man, smiling. "As long as we're in calm water, it's all right. Shut it when we leave, or you'll get a wave splashing on to the bed!"

It was queer, looking out of the round window. The glass was very, very thick, not a bit like ordinary window glass. No wave could possibly break it. The children could hear the water lapping outside. It was a lovely sound.

"Put all your things down for a while," said Mummy. "We must go up on deck. You'll want to be there when we move off, won't you?"

They left the cabin. They peeped into numbers 43 and 44, which were just exactly the same. There were two beds in each. Mummy and Granny were to share a cabin,



The gulls were screaming

and Mike and Daddy, and Belinda and Ann. Mike felt very grown-up to be sharing with Daddy. What fun it would be to go to bed in a cabin just below water-level!

They all went up on deck. What a noise and bustle there was! Steamers were blowing their sirens, gulls were screaming, sailors were shouting, and there was a terrific noise of creaking and winding, as all kinds of luggage was hauled up by a crane and dropped into the hold.

The children found a place by the deck-rail and looked over. People were still streaming up the gangway. The crane placed a great pile of luggage in the hold and then swung itself out over the dock-side again to pick up the last lot.

An enormous noise made the children almost jump out of their skins. "It's all right," said Daddy, amused, "that's our own ship's voice—her siren. It's to warn everyone that we're going soon. Look, they are going to pull in the gangway so that nobody else can board us."

Then the children noticed a rumbling noise that seemed to come from the heart of the ship—the engines were starting. They would soon be off!

"We're moving, we're moving!" shouted Mike, suddenly, in excitement. "Look, the dock-side is going away from us. We're off, we're off!"

Everyone shouted and waved. "Good-bye, good-bye!" The children yelled too. "Good-bye. We're really off! We're really OFF!"

5 GOOD-BYE, ENGLAND!

THE great ship moved slowly along the dock towards the open sea. Mike saw some little tugs that appeared to be joined to her by ropes. Could they be pulling her?

"Oh, yes—they're guiding her out and helping her," said Daddy. "Look, there's the sea. Now look back at the docks and see the masses of ships there, of all kinds—some unloading cargoes, some taking in goods, some waiting for passengers, some wanting coal and water, others waiting for repairs."

"It's all wonderful," said Mike, who looked happier than he had ever been in his life. "All those ships and steamers and cranes. To think that the ships have been all over the world and back many, many times. Oh, I wish I was a sailor. Daddy, can I be one when I grow up?"

"If you badly want to," said Daddy. "You must wait and see. You wanted to be a bus-

driver the other day. You might change your mind again."

"I shan't, I shan't," said Mike. "I want to be a sailor with a ship of my very own. I shall call it the *Belinda Ann*."

"Very nice too," said Daddy. "Now look—here we are out on the open sea. You'll feel the swell of the waves in a moment."

"Oh, yes!" said Belinda. "The ship isn't only moving forwards—she's moving a bit from side to side—rolling a little. I like it. She's come alive!"

"Yes, she's come alive," said Mike. "I say, I hope we get a storm. How grand to feel the *Pole Star* riding enormous waves, going up and down, and from side to side!"

"Well, I hope we don't," said Granny. "I shouldn't like that at all. I should probably be very seasick."

"We're none of us going to be seasick," said Mike. "We've made up our minds not to be. We don't want to waste a single minute of this trip in being seasick."

"Now the little tugs have gone," said Ann. "Good-bye, little tugs. I liked you.

A steward brought them a lovely tea

You were such busy, clever little things, fussing around."

"I'm hungry," said Mike. "And yet I don't feel as if I can possibly leave my place to have tea."

"Well, you must," said Mummy, firmly. "Come along. We'll go down to the dining-room and have tea. I'm sure Granny is dying for some!"

They went down the stairs to the second deck, and then down steps to the lounge. A steward brought them a lovely tea, with plenty of little cakes.

"Do we have nice food on board ship?" asked Belinda.

"Very nice," said Daddy. "Ann, do eat. Or are you still full up with excitement?"

"I am rather," said Ann, with a huge sigh. "But these cakes do look so nice. I really must have some. Oh, Granny, do you like our ship?"

"I love it," said Granny. "Wasn't it a good idea of mine?"

"The best idea you ever had in your life, Granny," said Belinda. "Mummy, what can we do when we've finished? May we go on deck again? On the top deck of all? I want to see the land we pass."

"Yes, if you like," said Mummy. "I need not tell any of you to be careful, not to play any silly tricks on board ship, and to come back to us every now and again so that we know you're all right."

"I'll look after the girls, Mummy," said Mike. "Daddy, are we going down the Solent? Shall we soon see the last of England?"

"Yes," said Daddy. "The very last. Go on up now if you want to. We'll come later."

The *Pole Star* was now well out to sea. Southampton had been left far behind. The children could see the Isle of Wight on one side and the mainland on the other. The *Pole Star* seemed to them to be going quite fast.

"See that long white tail behind her?" said Mike. "That's called the wake. It's the sea-water all churned up till it's white."

"We've still got gulls all round us," said Belinda. "I like them. I like the funny mewing noise they make too."

"It sounds as if they were laughing sometimes," said Mike. "Oh, look—is that the end of the Isle of Wight? We're going quite near it."

Dusk was now beginning to come over the sea. Lights sprang up on the big ship. Little lights twinkled here and there from other boats in the distance. Mummy came up behind the children.

"It's good-bye to England now," she said. "We're going swiftly away from her. To-morrow we shall be in the Bay of Biscay, and it may be very rough. I hope not, though."

"See that long white tail behind her?"

"I shan't mind!" said Mike. "Are we going to France?"

"No. Our first stop is at Lisbon, in Portugal," said Mummy. "Now, if you want to stop up here you must put coats on. It's a bit chilly to-night—though very soon we

shall feel so hot that we shall want to take our clothes off and bathe all day long!"

"What I want to do," said Ann, "is to go to bed in one of those cabins. Oh, Mummy —fancy going to bed under the water, and hearing the waves lapping against the side of the ship. Do you know, I really think I'll go now!"

EXCITEMENT had made Granny tired too. She said that she didn't think she would stay up to dinner that night. She would go to her cabin and have it there.

"May *we* stay up to dinner?" said Mike, excited at the thought of being with the grown-up people in the big dining-room each night.

"Certainly not," said Mummy. "You can't do that till you're much older. You can have a nice supper in your cabin. The cabin steward will bring it to you. I'll choose something good and have it sent down."

"What about baths?" said Belinda. "Do we have baths on board ship?"

"Of course!" said Mummy. "There is a bathroom at the end of our little passage, just for us six to use. You must have a bath every night, just as you do at home. You can

have your supper in the girls' cabin with them each night, Mike, if you like, and go along to your own afterwards."

It all sounded very thrilling. They went to find the bathroom. It was very tiny, but very nice. The bath was green and had huge shining taps. The water came out scalding hot. There were thick green towels too, marked P.S.

"P.S. How funny—that's what you put at the end of a letter, isn't it, if you want to add a bit more," said Belinda.

"P.S. stands for Pole Star, silly," said Mike. "I say, I wonder if the bath-water runs away into the sea."

"Of course it does," said Belinda. "Goodness, the ship rolled quite a bit then. I almost fell into the bath."

"Yes, you'll have to get your sea-legs," said Daddy, putting his head into the bathroom. "If she rolls much more you must be careful to hang on to the hand-rails."

They each had a bath in turn. Then Ann brushed Belinda's hair a hundred times and Belinda brushed Ann's. Mummy always made them brush their hair one hundred

"What a wonderful supper"

times. She said that made it shine brightly.

They cleaned their teeth at the little basin, and then the steward arrived with their supper.

"Ooooh!" said Ann, looking at the trays. "What a wonderful supper. Thank you very much."

"Grape-fruit with cherries on top!" said Mike.

"A cup of the most delicious-smelling soup in the world," said Belinda. "And look at these little squares of toast."

"And a pink jelly," said Ann. "My favourite. Oh, jelly, are you cold? You do shiver so. Never mind, you'll soon be warm inside me!"

Everyone laughed. They sat on the beds to eat their supper. They were very happy. It was all so new and strange and lovely. And it was only just beginning!

"The nicest part of a holiday is the beginning," said Mike. The ship gave a roll as he said that, and his jelly ran off the plate. "Oh, goodness—look at my jelly! It's on your bed, Ann."

"Well, spoon it off then," said Ann. "I say, I hope we don't roll off our beds at night."

"We might if it was very, very rough," said Mike, spooning up the jelly. "The beds are clamped to the floor, look—*they* won't move."

Ann climbed up on to her bed and looked out of the port-hole window. It was tight shut now, and the children had been told

that they were not to try and open it till they were in port again. She could see nothing through it at all, except darkness.

"Do you suppose we say our prayers on board ship?" she said, slipping down to the bed again.

"Why ever not?" said Mike, astonished. "What difference does it make where we are?"

"Well—it will seem a bit queer to kneel down on a floor that keeps moving about," said Ann. "I shall have to hold on to my bed."

"I've got a lot of prayers to say to-night," said Belinda. "I shall say thank you for this lovely holiday, and ask for all of us to be kept safe, and for there to be no shipwreck, and for Davey and Clopper to be happy while we're away, and . . ."

"Well, let's all be quiet and say them at the same time," said Mike. So for a few minutes there was no sound in the little cabin except for the waves slapping against the side of the ship. Then Ann scrambled into her bed and Belinda into hers. They were soft and springy, and the two girls cuddled down into them with delight.

"*My eyes keep shutting*"

Granny came in to say good night. She was in her dressing-gown ready to get into bed too. "Did you have the same supper as we did?" asked Ann. "Oh Granny, isn't it *fun* to be on board ship? I'm longing to wake up to-morrow morning and remember where I am!"

Then Mummy and Daddy came in. They had dressed for dinner and looked very grand. "You're beautiful, Mummy," said Belinda, hugging her. "Good night! I don't want to go to sleep for ages, but I'm afraid I shall go at once. My eyes keep shutting."

Mike went off to his cabin. Mummy had told him he could read for half an hour, as he was older than the girls. But he didn't want to. He just wanted to lie in his little bed and feel the movement of the ship. To and fro, to and fro, and then a little bit forward and backward.

"It's lovely," said Mike to himself. "I shall be a sailor when I grow up. I shall be the captain of a ship like this. I shall . . ."

But by that time he was asleep—and in his dreams he was captain of the *Pole Star*. What a wonderful dream!

IT was lovely waking up next morning, and remembering everything. Ann sat up and reached over to Belinda's bed. She gave her sister a poke.

"Belinda! We're on the sea! Do wake up."

Then Mike came in, beaming. "Are you awake? It's a gorgeous morning. I've been up on deck in my dressing-gown, and the sea's lovely. Do get up."

They got up and washed and dressed. They went on deck, and felt the sun pouring down on them. The sky was blue and the sea was blue-purple. Everything was glorious.

There was no land to be seen at all. It was a queer feeling to stand there by the deck-rail, and see nothing but water round them, stretching for miles and miles. There was not even another ship to be seen.

"If this is the Bay of Biscay it's jolly

calm," said Mike, half-disappointed. "I say —let's explore the ship, shall we?"

"After breakfast," said Mummy, coming up behind them. "Come along, there's a lovely breakfast waiting for you—six different kinds of cereal to choose from, more grape-fruits if you want them, and about twelve different dishes to choose from: bacon and eggs, ham, fish . . ."

"I certainly *shall* be a sailor when I grow up!" said Mike. "You make me feel awfully hungry, Mummy."

They explored the ship from top to toe after breakfast. They ran down both the upper and lower decks. There were countless deck-chairs there, and many people were sitting in them reading or snoozing in the sun.

The children found a swimming-pool at one end of the ship and were delighted. "Fancy a swimming-bath on a ship! We can bathe every day!" said Mike.

They found a nice sun-deck too, just under the captain's bridge. Mummy thought it would be lovely to sit there with Granny.

"There's everything you can possibly want

on this ship," said Mike to his mother. "Games to play on deck, places to sit, a swimming-pool, places to eat, a reading-room, that big dining-room where we have our meals, a ballroom for dancing . . . Oh, Mummy, there's everything!"

"May we bathe?" asked Belinda. "In that lovely pool, Mummy?"

"Yes, if you like," said Mummy, and the three went off to change. What fun they had swimming and diving and going down the chute! Ann wouldn't go down at first, but she did at last, and loved it. Splash! She flew down into the water and gasped.

"This is a lovely holiday," said Mike. "I love the *Pole Star*. She's a jolly good ship."

The children swam, and played deck tennis, throwing the rubber ring over the net to one another; they went down into the engine room to see the engines, and came back hot and dirty.

And then suddenly Belinda noticed something. "Look!" she said in surprise, "all the sailors have changed out of their dark-blue suits into white ones! Oh, how nice they look!"

They played deck tennis

So they had. Daddy laughed at the children's astonished faces. "Oh, that shows we're leaving the cold weather behind and coming into hot days. You'll have to change into your coolest things soon too."

One afternoon, when they were all sitting on the sun-deck, something made them jump suddenly. The ship's siren was near the deck, and it suddenly blew a loud, mournful note. "OOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"It's like a giant cow mooing," said Ann. "Oh Daddy—whatever did it do that for?"

"Look out to sea," said Daddy. "There's a thick sea-mist coming up. We'll soon be in it. What a pity! We shall soon be coming into Lisbon, and I would have liked you to see Portugal coming nearer."

But the sea-fog thickened, and the siren hooted continually. Nothing could be seen from the deck. The sea-mist made it chilly, and the children went down below to play games.

"Is it dangerous?" asked Ann, thinking of ships moving blindly in the fog. "Shall we bump into something?"

"The captain is up on the bridge, at the wheel," said Daddy. "He won't leave it until the fog has cleared and he has brought the ship to safety. He'll be up there for twenty-four hours on end, if need be."

But when at last the ship steamed into the beautiful harbour at Lisbon, the fog had cleared. Night had come, and the harbour gleamed with lights. The big ship moved to her place in the dock.

"We're staying here for the night," said

Mummy, looking over the deck-rail at all the ships in the harbour, each with its lights showing brightly. "You'll quite miss the roll of the ship, won't you! To-morrow we will take you to see the royal palace of Pena, set on the top of a steep rugged hill."

"Oh—a palace! Did kings live there?" asked Ann. "Oh Mummy, do you know, it will be quite exciting to walk on land again. I've forgotten what it feels like!"

When the children went to bed that night they opened the port-hole of their cabin and gazed out into the quiet harbour. Many big ships were there, and many little fishing-boats too, with red sails. It was lovely to look at them all, rocking a little on the dark water, where all the lights were reflected.

"It even smells different here," said Ann, sniffing. "It smells foreign! Oh I say—fancy going to see a palace to-morrow. I'm sure it won't be as grand as our Windsor Castle, though!"

8 GOING ASHORE

THE harbour was even lovelier in the morning, when many boats were moving out. The children liked the bright-sailed fishing-boats most of all. They were quite sorry when Mummy came to say that Daddy was ready to take them to the royal palace at Cintra.

Off they went in a taxi that went much faster than any English one. In about three-quarters of an hour's time they came to a very steep, rugged hill, with a winding road that went up and up to the top.

And there, on the summit, was the palace. "It *does* remind me just a bit of Windsor Castle," said Mike. "Isn't it lovely? Can we go in?"

It was strange to wander through a palace that had once belonged to many long-ago kings. After a while Ann began to worry about the ship.

"Mummy, we'd better go back! Suppose it went without us. Do let's go."

They went at last, and tore down the hill at breakneck speed in the taxi. Belinda shut her eyes in terror and hoped they would soon be at the bottom.

"Are those palm trees?" asked Mike, as they sped through the beautiful countryside. "And what are those mournful-looking trees? Oh, cypresses. And look, I'm sure those are orange trees. And what's that big grove

There, on the summit, was the palace

of trees with great green leaves? I've never seen trees like that before."

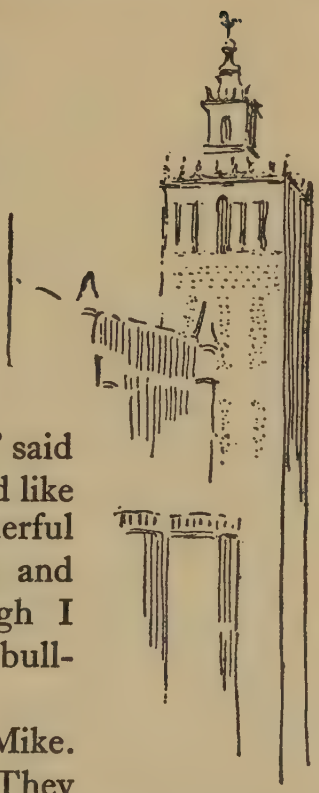
"Olive trees," said Daddy. "You've heard of olives and olive-oil, haven't you?"

"I'm quite longing to be on board ship again," said Ann. "I do hope she hasn't gone without us."

She hadn't, of course. There she lay in the harbour, gleaming in welcome. They ran up the gangway, feeling as if they had come back home!

"We go to Spain next," said Granny, welcoming them. She had not been

Seville was a beautiful town



to the palace, because she was still feeling tired. "To Seville. I know a place there called the House of a Thousand Shawls. Daddy, would you like to go there and choose one for Mummy?"

"I certainly would," said Daddy. "And I should like to go to the wonderful cathedral there—yes, and see a bull-ring, though I don't want to see a bull-fight."

"Oh *no*," said Mike. "The poor horses! They haven't any chance against the bulls at all. I should like to see the bull-fighters, though; they must look very grand, and be very brave men."

The ship sailed on to Spain. It went up a wide river to the old town of Seville.

"Do the Seville oranges you make marma-

lade of come from this district?" asked Belinda.

"They do," said Mummy. "Oh, look at the bulls in those fields, Mike. What big creatures they are!"

Seville was a beautiful town, and the most beautiful thing in it was the cathedral. All the children crept in quietly, awed by its grandeur and beauty. They gazed at the great stained-glass windows.

The sunshine seemed very bright indeed when they came out again. Belinda blinked. "You know," she said, "ordinary little churches are just houses for God—but a cathedral is a palace for Him."

"And now," said Granny, "we'll go to the House of a Thousand Shawls. Come along."

They went to it. It was a great shop, full of nothing but magnificent shawls. They were spread everywhere, and hung down from the roof and over the walls. Oh, the colours—red and green and blue and orange and black, all embroidered most beautifully.

"Which one will you have?" Daddy asked Mummy. "What about this deep red one? That would suit you beautifully."

"Oh yes, have that one, Mummy," said Belinda. "I do like the great dark roses embroidered all over it. Isn't Seville a beautiful place, with beautiful things!"

But the bull-ring wasn't so beautiful. They all went to have a look at one. It was quite empty, and was strewn with sawdust. Ann didn't like the smell.

"Let's come away," she said, pulling at her father's hand. "I don't like to think of the bulls hurting the horses, and the bull-fighters hurting the bulls, and everyone cheering. Let's go back to the ship with your lovely shawl, Mummy."

So back they went again, wandering through the Spanish streets, stared at by black-eyed, black-haired girls, who wore little black shawls over their heads. Nobody wore a hat, and they all looked gay and lively, and talked very fast to one another. The children wished they could understand what they said.

Mummy bought each of the girls a tiny gold Spanish bracelet. Mike chose a wooden carving of a bull. They took them proudly back to the *Pole Star*.

"She's hooting, she's hooting," said Ann, in alarm, as they drew near. "She's telling us to hurry up!"

"It's all right. There's still half an hour," said Daddy, laughing. "Got your shawl, Mummy? Up the gangway, all of you!"

"Now we're off to Madeira, and the Canary Isles," said Granny. "We shan't see land for a while. But maybe we shall see a few interesting things—flying-fish, for instance!"

"Flying-fish!" cried Belinda. "Oh, are there *really* such creatures! I thought they were like unicorns, and only belonged to fairy tales."

"I'm going to stand at the deck-rail all day to-morrow and look for them!" said Ann. "Oh Mummy—do you think I could catch one and take it home with me? I *would* like it to fly round the caravan!"

9 FLYING-FISH, DOLPHINS—AND BULLOCKS!

THE next day the children asked one of the sailors if there was any chance of seeing flying-fish on the trip.

"Oh yes!" said the sailor. "You watch out, the next day or two. We often see them when we go down south."

But it was not until two days later that Belinda heard someone shouting loudly. "Look—flying-fish! Look!"

All the children rushed to the deck-side. Then they saw a strange sight. Rising right out of the sea was a small shoal of gleaming fish! They flew through the air for about half a minute, spreading their great front fins.

They went very fast indeed, and then dived back gracefully into the sea. But in another moment out they flew again, glittering in the sunshine.

"Oh, aren't they lovely!" cried Ann. "I never, never thought I'd see fish flying. Daddy, how do they fly?"

"Well, they haven't any wings, of course," said Daddy. "They swim tremendously fast under water, and then, to escape an enemy, they fling themselves above the surface, and use their long fins to help them."

"Is there an enemy making them fly now?" asked Mike. "Oh yes, look—what are those things showing here and there in the water, chasing the flying-fish?"

"Dolphins," said Daddy. "See, there they go, leaping right out of the water, a mile a minute! They belong to the whale family. There are few creatures that swim faster than a dolphin!"

The children watched the curious dolphins, with their long, beak-shaped mouths, leaping along after the flying-fish. It was really most exciting. "I *think* the flying-fish got away," said Ann, at last. "Dolphins and flying-fish—I never in my life thought I'd see those."

The sun grew hotter and hotter as they went more and more south. The children wore as little as they could. The passengers became one big family, for now that there was no land to be seen they had to find their

"*I* think *the flying-fish got away*"

interests on board, and talk and play with one another.

There was lifeboat practice. That was fun. Everyone had to learn where he or she was to go in case of danger. The children knew exactly which lifeboat they were to make for, and how to put on a life-belt quickly, so that if danger came to the *Pole Star* at any time, they would be saved.

"If everyone knows what to do and where to go to, there is no panic or muddle," Daddy said. "And we have to remember that, just like whooping-cough, fear is catching, and we must always be brave, especially when we are with a lot of people in danger."

"Is bravery catching too?" said Mike.

"Oh yes," said Daddy, "and it's a very good thing to catch. You want to give it to as many people as you can!"

The days began to slip by too quickly. The sun shone down all the time. And then they came to their next port of call!

"We shall come to the island of Madeira soon," said Mummy. "You'll like that. We'll take you for a ride in a bullock cart,

What fun to ride in a bullock-cart!

down very steep, narrow little streets, lined with small cobble-stones!"

"A *bullock*-cart!" said Belinda. "I shall like that. Why don't we have bullock-carts at home? I think they would be much nicer than buses."

Madeira was lovely. The *Pole Star* came nearer and nearer to the sun-drenched island, and at last sailed into harbour there, while many jabbering people ran about ashore, excited and welcoming.

The children were eager to go on shore. It seemed such a long time since they had seen land! They felt queer when they walked on the dock. "The earth seems so solid somehow, after the swing and sway of the ship," said Mike. "I've got sea-legs now instead of land-legs!"

Bullock-carts were waiting to take the travellers for trips. What fun it was to ride in one!

"Why, they have no wheels!" cried Ann, in surprise. "Look—they have runners, like sledges, instead of wheels Can we get in?"

Some of the streets were very steep indeed, and the cobble-stones bright and slippery. The runners of the bullock-cart slid easily and quickly over them. The big, sleepy-eyed bullocks were strong, and pulled them swiftly along. The children were full of delight.

"Oh Mummy! I wish we had bullock-carts at home, I really do. Oh, why are we stopping?"

"Mummy wants to buy some hand-made cloths, said Daddy. "Look, we'll go into this little shop. You can each choose six handkerchiefs, embroidered by the people of this

island—perhaps sewn by children as young as you, Ann."

It was fun shopping in the queer little hut. They bought a lot of things and then stepped back into their bullock-cart.

"To the ship, bullocks, please!" said Mike grandly, and down the cobbled street at top speed went the bullocks. Ann gasped. What a pace!

"It's funny to think they may be having cold, rainy weather in England now," said Mike, fanning himself. "Look at all those brilliant flowers out—just like summer. And I never felt the sun so hot before. I'm sure I should get sunstroke if I took my hat off!"

"You certainly would," said Daddy. "So don't try it. Now, here we are, back on board again. Where do you think we go to next—to the Canary Isles!"

"Do canaries live there?" asked Ann.

"Of course!" said Daddy. "You'll see them flying all round you, as common as sparrows!"

"Flying-fish, dolphins, bullocks, canaries." said Belinda. "Whatever next!"

10 EVERYTHING IS SO EXCITING!

ON went their good ship, the *Pole Star*, on and on over the southern seas. And when they came to the Canary Isles, it was just as Daddy had said—there were plenty of wild canaries flying about, and singing loudly!

"But they're not bright yellow like ours at home," said Mike, disappointed. "They're green. Still, they sing just as beautifully. Daddy, are there any Parrot Isles? I hope we shall go to them too. I'd like to take home a parrot and teach it to talk."

"Three parrots in one family are quite enough," said Mummy. "Oh, look at those little boys swimming round the ship. They're like fish, they're so much at home in the water."

Some of the passengers threw pennies into the clear water. A horde of small boys at once dived for them. They did not miss a single penny. It was marvellous to watch them.

"Look at those little boys swimming round the ship"

"We'll do that in the swimming-pool," said Mike. "We'll practise it. It looks quite easy, but I suppose you have to keep your eyes open under water."

A boy yelled something from the water

below. One of the sailors told the passengers what he had said.

"He says, for a shilling he will swim right under the ship and come up the other side," said the sailor.

"I'll give him a shilling then," said one of the passengers, and threw one into the water. It circled downwards. The boy swam after it and caught it. He came up to the surface, and waved his hand to everyone at the deck-side.

Then down he went and down, at the side of the ship. Soon he was lost to sight. The passengers left that side of the ship and went to the other side to watch the boy coming up there.

Ann was rather scared. "He can't swim under the ship—it's a long long way down, into the very deep water, where it's dark," she said. "Oh Daddy—he won't get caught under the ship, will he? He'll come up, won't he?"

"Of course," said Daddy. "He does it a dozen times a day! Now, stand by me and watch for him to come up."

All the same, it seemed a long time before

a little dark speck appeared far down in the water. And then the boy shot up to the surface, gasping, and waved his hand merrily. He had done it!

"Bravo!" shouted the passengers. "Well, well—right under the ship! How did he have the breath?"

Little boats came out and surrounded the ship, selling fruit of all kinds—bananas, peaches, oranges, even pineapples. The dark-faced, bright-eyed people shouted their wares, and even climbed up the side of the ship with them.

It was all very exciting. The three children, burnt brown now by the hot sun, enjoyed every new and strange thing they saw. There seemed no end to them. When they went ashore, they found that many of the wild canaries had been caught and put into cages for people to buy.

"Few of them will live to reach England," said Daddy. "They are so used to this hot climate, poor little things."

All the same, many people bought them in little wicker cages. They gave them to the sailors on board ship to keep for them, and

the children went to see them every day. They sang their hearts out in the little wicker cages, and Ann longed to set them all free.

"They've not been born and brought up in cages as our cage-canaries have," she said to Belinda, sadly. "I'm sure they are unhappy."

The sailors had put up a rope-line in their quarters, and had hung the little cages all along it. It was a queer sight to see. The children went along each day to make sure that the birds had water to drink.

The good ship went on again over the bright blue sea. The days seemed to run into one another. The only day the children really knew was Sunday. Then there was a service held on the deck, and all the sailors came too.

The captain read from the Bible, and led the prayers. The children stood there in the sun and the breeze listening. They liked it very much.

"I've never been to church on board a big ship before," said Ann. "Mummy, didn't the hymns sound nice sung to the sound of the sea and the wind?"

"To-morrow will be Monday because this

The dark-faced, bright-eyed people shouted their wares

is Sunday," said Mike. "I don't know the days any more! By the time to-morrow comes I shall have forgotten it's Monday. That's the queer part about a holiday. You just don't know which day is which—they're all so nice."

"Where are we going next?" asked Ann.

"To Africa!" said Mummy. "To French Morocco. And then, my dear—home!"

"Oh, dear—shall we go home so soon?" said Ann, in dismay. "Can't we go right round the world, Mummy?"

"Good gracious, no," said Mummy.

"I'll take you and Belinda all round the world when I'm a sailor," promised Mike. "We'll stop at any port we like for as long as we want to."

"There's no land to be seen anywhere now," said Belinda, looking over the sea. "Just blue water. Let's go and have a game of deck-tennis. I'll take you on, Mike. Then we'll have a bathe in the swimming-pool. Daddy, will you come and throw pennies for us, please? We're going to be diving-boys!"

"Right," said Daddy. "Who'll swim under the ship for a shilling?" But nobody would!

11 A QUEER KIND OF SHOPPING

THE *Pole Star* went on to North Africa. The children stood at the deck-rail and watched the land gradually coming nearer and nearer. They saw a big city spreading before them, a city of gleaming white buildings and wide streets.

"This is Casablanca," said Daddy. "If you are good I'll take you ashore and let you go shopping in the bazaars—little streets of native shops where you can buy almost anything!"

"We'll buy presents to take home," said Mummy. "We won't go to any of the big shops in the wide streets. We'll go, as Daddy says, to the little native ones."

So, feeling very thrilled, the three children stepped ashore at Casablanca, their money in their purses.

A taxi took them to the streets of little shops. But almost at once Ann turned to her mother in disgust. "Mummy! There's the most awful smell. I can't bear it."

"Oh, there's always an awful smell in these places," said Mummy. "Look, here is my bottle of smelling-salts. Hold it to your nose."

Poor Ann was nearly sick with the smell of the dirty streets. The others put their handkerchiefs over their noses. They looked with interest at the queer little shops. They sold all kinds of things—hand-made brooches, rings and bracelets, beautiful pottery, queer slippers with turned-up toes, bags, baskets, brass pots. . . .

"They're all quite cheap," said Daddy. "But you have to bargain for them."

"What's bargain?" asked Ann, still sniffing Mummy's smelling-salts.

"Well, I say a low price, and the shopkeeper says a high price, and he comes down a bit, and I go up a bit, and in the end I pay about half what he asks," said Daddy.

"But why don't they put a proper price on, like we do at home?" asked Belinda. "It seems such a waste of time."

"Ah, but they enjoy their bargaining," said Daddy. "And they have plenty of time to waste. Now, watch me!"

Ann badly wanted a tiny brooch

Daddy wanted to buy some lovely dishes, patterned in all colours. He asked their price, but he spoke in French, because everyone spoke in French in Casablanca.

Then the man said a price and Daddy looked shocked. Daddy said a price, and the man looked horrified. So it went on, and the children laughed to see Daddy and the shopkeeper arguing and haggling vigorously.

At last Daddy paid over some French money and the man gave him the dishes, all smiles. The bargaining was over. The man had got the price he wanted, and Daddy had

paid the price he meant to pay, so both were pleased.

"Can I do some bargaining too?" asked Ann. She badly wanted a tiny brooch shaped like a flying-fish.

"Of course you can't, silly," said Mike. "You can't talk French."

"No—I can't," said Ann. "Well, I'm going to learn it as fast as I can when I get back to school. I can see it would be very useful. Daddy, please bargain for that flying-fish brooch."

So Daddy bargained again and got the brooch. Ann was delighted. Then Belinda got a pair of slippers in red, with silver-edged turn-up toes, and Mike got a curious brass pot, carved with little ships.

"I like the lovely things they sell, but oh, how very dirty everything and everybody is," said Ann. "Look at that meat—and those sweets—all crawling with flies! Why aren't the people cleaner?"

"Perhaps because they haven't been taught to be!" said Mike. "Well, we often grumble at having to wash our hands and put on clean clothes, but I'd rather do that too often than

not enough, like these people. I shan't grumble about having to be clean any more, now I see what happens when people are dirty."

"I like the lovely things they sell, but . . ."

"Mummy, stop! Look at this darling little baby," said Belinda, suddenly. "But oh, Mummy, it's got flies crawling all round its poor eyes!"

"Poor little thing," said Mummy, trying to brush them away. But they came back again at once. "I'm afraid a good many babies go blind because of these dreadful flies. Oh dear, such a beautiful city, and such lovely things in it—but at the back of it all, so much dirt and so many horrid sights."

"I didn't know before how lucky we are to be born in Britain," said Mike. "Why, we might have been born one of these poor little babies, in all this dirt and smelliness!"

"I think I'm going to be sick," said Ann. "I want to go back. It smells so bad. I don't want to come here again, not even to buy these lovely things."

They went back to the ship. Daddy looked at Ann. "Poor Ann! Well, I wanted you to see how some people have to live. Now, cheer up—I'll take you for a ride over the countryside in a motor-coach, and you can look out for monkeys!"

So off they went that afternoon, and to

Ann's joy they saw hundreds and hundreds of monkeys, chattering gaily, swinging from tree to tree. Then they came to a white-walled house, set by the water, and there they drank mint-tea from little cups without any handles.

"Mint-tea!" said Belinda, sniffing it in delight. "Mummy, can you make some when we go home? It's *much* nicer than ordinary tea."

"Smells, and monkeys, and mint-tea," said Ann solemnly. "We never know what we're going to have any day now!"

12 THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

AND now the trip would soon be over. The *Pole Star* turned northwards, and left the great white city of Casablanca behind. The next land the children would see would be England!

They began to long for their own country.

"Going to other countries only seems to make our own all the nicer, somehow," said Belinda. "I feel as if I really *loved* England now. I keep thinking of things like primroses, and rainy days in April when the sun shines out suddenly, and buttercups all shining gold."

"So do I," said Mike. "We've had a most glorious time, and I'll never forget it, but it's England for me every time! All the same—I shall certainly be a sailor when I grow up. I must see more of the world!"

"There's only one thing we didn't have," said Ann, "and that's a storm."

"Well, there's time for that, Missy," said

a big sailor near by. "We're running into one to-night! I can feel it coming. I'll be changing out of my white things into my warm blue ones before many hours are gone!"

"Oooh," said Ann, her eyes round, "a storm at sea! Do you really mean it? Will it be dangerous? Shall we have to take to the lifeboats? What a good thing the *Pole Star* has so many."

"We won't need the lifeboats this trip," said the sailor, laughing. "But you may feel a bit seasick—and don't you come up on deck when the ship starts rolling about!"

The sailor was right. The storm came that night, when the children were in bed in their cabins. The wind began to howl dismally, and big waves blew up. The *Pole Star* began to roll tremendously.

Ann felt a bit scared. "I don't mind so much when the ship rolls from side to side," she said to Mummy. "But I don't like it when it goes up and down the other way. It gives me a funny feeling. I think I might be seasick."

"Granny's feeling a bit funny too," said

Mummy, smiling. "A lot of people will get a touch of seasickness if this goes on. But you lie down and suck these barley sugars, and you won't feel so bad."

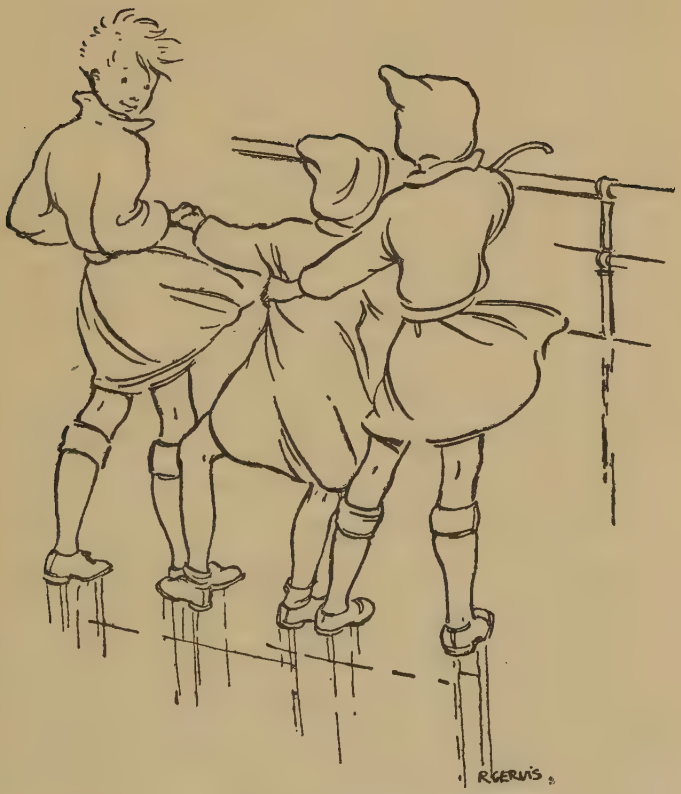
The storm went on all night long. Ann screamed when something began to slide about the floor. Belinda put the light on. "Something's sliding over the floor," wept Ann. "What is it, what is it?"

"Oh Ann—it's only that suitcase under your bed," said Belinda, with a giggle. "Look, there it comes from under your bed —and now it's gone under mine—and when the ship rolls the other way, it'll come out again and go to yours. Yes, there it is. It'll go to and fro all the time."

Ann gave a giggle through her tears. It was funny to think of the case popping backwards and forwards like that.

Next morning the sea was still very rough, and the children found it difficult to walk, and very difficult indeed to climb up the stairs. They hung on to the hand-rails and tried to keep their balance as best they could.

"Everything will slide off the breakfast-table," said Mike, but it didn't, because the



What enormous waves!

stewards had put up wooden edges called "fiddles" at every table, and these stopped the dishes and plates from sliding off.

It was quite a puzzle to eat and drink without spilling anything, when the boat was

rolling so much. The children laughed to see people doing their best to stop their plates from rushing away from them.

Daddy took them up on deck to see the angry waters. What enormous waves reared up their grey-green heads! How they slapped against the ship! Some broke on deck and water ran everywhere. It was very thrilling indeed.

But by the time the *Pole Star* was due back in England the storm had gone, the sea was calm, and the October sun shone down serenely. The children had all put on warm things once more, because it had become much colder as they went northwards.

They stood watching for their first glimpse of England. "There, over there!" yelled Mike, suddenly, his sharp eyes catching a very faint line on the horizon. "Oh Daddy, there's dear old England."

He had a queer lump in his throat as he watched the faint line grow bigger and stronger. He seemed to know and love his own country much more now that he had been to others. He would always always love it best!

"Well, our trip is over," said Granny's voice. "And how lovely it has all been. How brown and well we are! And now children, school and hard work to make up all the weeks you have missed!"

"Yes," said Belinda. "I shall like going back. I'm ready for school now. What a lot we shall have to tell the others!"

"I hope we do Portugal and Spain and all the rest in geography this term," said Mike. "I feel I know a bit of *real* geography at last!"

England was clearly to be seen now. Mummy squeezed Daddy's hand. "Home's all the nicer for having been away from it, isn't it?" she said. "Dear old England! We're coming back to your autumn mists, your yellowing trees and falling leaves—and we're glad!"

"Won't it be fun to live in the caravans again, and see Davey and Clopper, and hear the rain on the caravan roof when we're cosily inside?" said Belinda. "Oh hurry, *Pole Star*—we want to be home again!"

"There's no place like home!" sang Ann, suddenly. "Good-bye, bulls and flying-fish

and dolphins and diving boys and bullock-carts and monkeys—and smells! Good-bye! There's no place like home!"